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THE MYTHS OF PLATO. Translated, with Introductory and other Observations, by Professor J. A. Stewart, M. A., London. MacMillan & Co., New York: The MacMillan Co., 1905.

This is an extremely interesting book, and, though most of it is rather outside the scope of this JOURNAL, it can be heartily recommended to the attention of all students of Ethics. Most of the Myths of Plato are here given both in the original Greek and in English translations; and they are accompanied by a number of valuable explanatory remarks. But the chief attraction of the volume lies rather in certain general views that are expounded in the introduction and applied in the course of the work. The view most commonly taken of Plato's Myths is that they fill up gaps in his constructive philosophical work. When he could not quite think anything out, he told a story instead. From this point of view, the Myths represent the failures in Plato's philosophical efforts. Professor Stewart's doctrine is almost diametrically opposed to this. For him the Myths are rather the culminating points in Plato's philosophy. They reveal "Plato the Mythologist, or Prophet, as distinguished from Plato the Dialectician, or Reasoner." "The Myth bursts in upon the dialogue with a revelation of something new and strange; the narrow, matter-of-fact, workaday experience, which the argumentative conversation puts in evidence, is suddenly flooded, as it were, and transfused by the inrush of a vast experience, as from another world—'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.'" This view of the Platonic Myth is further connected by Professor Stewart with a general theory of poetry. "The essential charm of all poetry," he says, "lies in its power of inducing, satisfying, and regulating what may be called Transcendental Feeling, especially that form of Transcendental Feeling which manifests itself as solemn sense of Timeless Being—of 'That which was, and is, and ever shall be' overshadowing us with its presence." This view is illustrated at considerable length by long poetic extracts. "Transcendental feeling I would explain genetically," he goes on, "as an effect produced within consciousness (and, in the form in which poetry is chiefly concerned with Transcendental Feeling, within the dream-consciousness) by the persistence in us of that primeval condition from which we are sprung, when Life was still as sound asleep as Death, and there was no Time yet. The principle solely operative in that prime-

val condition is indeed the fundamental principle of our nature, being that 'Vegetative Part of the Soul' which made from the first, and still silently makes, the assumption on which our whole rational life of conduct and science rests—the assumption that Life is worth living."

This point is further connected by Professor Stewart with a specific metaphysical doctrine, which is thus briefly indicated. "I hold that it is in Transcendental Feeling, manifested normally as Faith in the Value of Life, and ecstatically as sense of Timeless Being, and not in thought proceeding by way of speculative construction, that Consciousness comes nearest to the object of Metaphysics, Ultimate Reality." "The 'problem of the Universe' is not propounded to Consciousness, and Consciousness cannot solve it. Consciousness can *feel* that it has been propounded and solved elsewhere, but cannot genuinely *think* it. It is propounded to that on which Consciousness supervenes (and supervenes only because the problem has been already 'solved')—it is propounded to what I would call 'selfhood' or 'personality,' and is ever silently being 'understood' and 'solved' by that principle in the continued 'vegetative life' of individual and race. And the most trustworthy, or least misleading report of what the 'problem' is, and what its 'solution' is, reaches Consciousness through Feeling. Feeling stands nearer than Thought does to that basal self or personality which is, indeed, at once the living 'problem of the Universe' and its living solution."

These remarkable doctrines cannot be adequately dealt with in such a review as this. We can only suggest a few questions. 1. Can it be seriously maintained that Plato, the philosopher of Dialectic, he whose supreme conception of the highest kind of life was that of one in which we are free from the body and see things with the pure eye of thought, yet found his ultimate view of the world in something which is the negation of thought, and which has to be interpreted as "vegetative?" 2. Can "Transcendental Feeling" be a complete statement of the chief content of an art in which such writers as Chaucer and Burns are recognized as no inconsiderable masters? 3. Can a principle of "Life" be "timeless?" 4. What is meant by a condition in which "there *was* no Time yet?" 5. Can "That which *was*, and *is*, and ever *shall be*" be "Timeless Being?" In other words, is existence through all time the same thing as timeless existence? On these points one would be glad to have further light from Professor Stewart.

Two further points may be noted in this volume, as being of special interest to students of Ethics. One is Professor Stewart's view of Plato's Militarism: "The doctrine of the *Republic* is that the leaders of civilization are men who have been trained for war. . . Here Plato seems to me to take hold of a fundamental principle in biology. Look at the races of living creatures; their specific beauty and intelligence have been developed on lines laid down by the necessity of defence and attack: *victrix causa deis placuit*. . . . The individual Soul may . . . enter into peace—*e venni dal martirio a questa pace*; but the State has no immortal destiny—it is of this world, and is always implicated in the struggle of the earthly life." The Aristotelian doctrine that we make war for the sake of peace is not in Plato's vein. Were war to cease in the world, what would become of the Platonic system of Education? Plato does not expect—and, more than that, does not wish—to see war cease. His ideal of earthly life is Hellas in arms against Barbarism. War began in ἐπιθυμία in appetite; then it was waged to satisfy θυμός —for *la gloire*, and we ought to hope that the time will come when it will be waged only in the cause of λόγος —to propagate an idea; but let us remember—this is Plato's message to us, as I understand it—that the "idea" we fight for—our ἐν τούτῳ νίκας —is a sign which shines only before the eyes of the militant, and would fade from the sky if we laid down our arms." This is interesting; but is it historically sound? Professor Stewart seems to express himself here as if Plato were a sort of antique Nietzsche, scorning the weak concessions of Aristotle, and preaching his militant "message" in the face of a slave "morality." But after all, Aristotle came after Plato; and even Aristotle *began* with the description of the military virtues. It is surely a strange inversion of history to write as if the world—and especially the Greek world—had to have the conception of the Military State brought to it as a "message." Surely it was at a far later time that men's "ears were stuffed with cotton."

The other point to which I wish to call attention is the instructive way in which Professor Stewart deals with the "Cambridge Platonists," and especially the way in which he connects their doctrines with those of Plato, on the one hand, and T. H. Green, on the other. But to this I can only refer.

The whole book is certainly full of suggestion; even if we must add—as I think we must—that the view of Plato's attitude here

taken is a little unhistorical, and that the metaphysical doctrines here suggested are a little crude.

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KANT'S ETHIK. Eine Einführung in ihre Haupt-probleme und Beiträge zu deren Lösung, von Dr. August Messer, A. O., Professor der Philosophie zu Geissen. Leipzig, Veit & Comp. 1904.

Prof. Messer defines the objects of his book as two-fold : firstly, to serve as an introduction to the study of Kant's ethical writings ; and secondly, to set forth their significance for the solution of the main ethical problems, in the form which they have, since Kant's own day assumed. In respect of both purposes, the author seems to me to have achieved conspicuous success. His study both of Kant's better-known writings and of the constantly increasing mass of posthumous Kantian publications has been patient and profound ; while the appraisal of the issues which divide ethical speculation in the present, set forth with remarkable insight and clearness, especially in the thirteenth and sixteenth chapters, is in the highest degree stimulating and valuable.

To those readers, at least, whose main knowledge of Kant's thought has been derived from second-hand sources, Dr. Messer will seem to be an ideal commentator. While he would doubtless recognize Kant as his master, he falls into none of the extravagances of hero-worship, and is far from adopting a mere "Back to Kant !" as the burden of his discourse. He distinguishes by the help of the resources which fuller knowledge and the later development of thought supply, the essential and central achievements of Kant's intellect from the accretions derived from academic pedantry and personal idiosyncrasy. The effect upon the reader must be to kindle his interest anew in the growth of Kant's potent spiritual personality and to enable him to take up with hope and zeal the study of the original writings in which this growth can be clearly traced. The author claims, in my opinion, quite justly, that on the two main questions, as to which Kant is at issue with eudaemonist, evolutionist, and deterministic ethics, our verdict must be given in favor of Kant. The first Kantian doctrine which is vindicated against false interpretations and hostile attacks is the doctrine of the categorical imperative. The essence of this doctrine is shown to be that the only goodness which deserves the name of moral goodness consists in the per-